

# **Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals**

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **DIA To Establish Resident Medications Study Group**

DES MOINES, IOWA - Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals (DIA) Director Steve Young today announced his intention to form a study group to examine issues surrounding medications obtained and used by long-term care residents. "The Department recently noticed proposed rules that would have prohibited long-term care facilities from restricting the manner in which residents obtain their prescribed medications," Young said. During the public comment period, it became clear that the issues surrounding resident medications must include multiple disciplines, citing the insurance industry and pharmaceutical manufacturers as examples. Young further noted that the Department has elected to terminate the rule making process on this issue to permit further study.

"Until we bring all the interested parties together to fully examine the issues surrounding resident medications, we cannot adequately address a resident's choice of pharmacy," the director explained.

Young said the study group will examine issues dealing with a resident's choice of pharmacy, reduced costs of medications, utilization of third-party payors, and medication packaging and resident safety. "We want all the interested parties, effected individuals, advocates and regulators to take a long look at this most-serious issue and come to some consensus on how to address the increasing costs of resident medications," the Director continued.

Public comments received by the Department contained numerous offers of assistance from the long-term care industry, medical professionals, and resident advocates. Young noted that a consensus appeared during the public hearing which indicated recognition of the issues and a need to study them in more detail with an aim at finding some resolution. "Now is the time to bring these individuals and organizations to the table to work out a solution that allows a resident's choice of pharmacy without compromising resident safety or increasing the potential for medication errors," he added.

DIA Health Facilities Division Administrator Marvin Tooman will chair the Department's resident medications study group. Representatives from the long-term care industry, professional organizations, regulatory agencies, as well as residents and their family members will be asked to participate in the group's discussions. "I am extremely hopeful that the study group will come forward with recommendations to address the medication needs of Iowa's long-term care residents in a positive and productive manner," Young concluded.

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